

A study on the C-E translation of metaphor in *Fortress Besieged* from the perspective of cultural translation theory

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Abstract: The extensive use of metaphors in *Fortress Besieged* is a major feature of the entire text and the heterogeneous cultural information involved in the novel is extremely difficult for the target readers to understand. The translation of literary works is not only the translation of the text itself, but also the output of culture. Metaphors are closely related to culture, and they have a high degree of cultural specificity. This article will adopt applicable translation methods from the perspective of cultural translation to study the English translation of metaphors in *Fortress Besieged*. Guided by this theory, translating literary works can better showcase the cultural connotations of the original work. It helps to improve the translator's ability to translate Chinese literature, promote foreigners' understanding of Chinese literary works, and accelerate the internationalization of Chinese culture.

Key words: metaphor; cultural translation theory; translation

1 Introduction

As a language and social-cultural phenomenon, metaphor has cultural particularity. Correct handling of different styles of metaphors cannot only help the translator to accurately and naturally transform the source language into the target language, but also enable the readers of the target language to effectively understand the cultural information contained in the article. There are many similarities and differences. These similarities are easier to handle in the process of Chinese and English translation, but cultural differences will undoubtedly bring many difficulties to metaphorical translation. Due to the differences in living habits, religious beliefs, social, historical background, way of thinking and social values, Chinese-English metaphors also have their own cultural connotations [1].

Metaphor in *Fortress Besieged* mainly refers to the concrete and abstract things. This metaphorical approach is closer to the everyday experience. The author of *Fortress Besieged* links two seemingly unrelated things, indicating the similarities between Chinese and foreign cultures, which stems from the author's extensive understanding of Chinese and Western cultures.

This paper will translate the metaphors involved in *Fortress Besieged* through different translation methods.

2 Theoretical basis

Cultural translation theory is one of the important elements of literary translation research, because it involves many cultural factors in the translation process. Given that *Fortress Besieged* is a literary work with cultural factors, this section

will introduce the connotation and principles of cultural translation theory.

2.1 Connotation of cultural translation theory

In the 1980s, Susan Basnett put forward the cultural theory. This translation theory holds that the whole translation activity is not only a language transformation behavior, but also a language communication activity based on different cultural levels. Language is not only an important part of culture, but also an important carrier to promote and spread culture. Therefore, from the perspective of cultural translation, the basic element of translation is "culture", and its goal is to promote in-depth linguistic communication [2].

2.2 Principle of cultural translation theory

In her book *Translation Studies*, Susan Basnett focuses on the translational ideas of the concept of "cultural translation". The cultural translation theory mainly expounds the following three principles.

First, translation research should take culture as the basic unit, rather than staying at the language level with phonemes, sentences and chapters as the translation units.

Second, translation is essentially a linguistic communication activity within and between cultures, which is not a simple one-to-peer equivalence process. Readers or listeners can understand various cultural customs, lifestyles and unique thinking characteristics. Excellent translators should be famous "cultural people", familiar with the source language culture and target language culture, and familiar with the local culture and target language culture.

Thirdly, translation should emphasize the functional equivalence between the source language and the target language in the culture, and pay attention to the dynamic transformation of languages, rather than treating translation as a static transformation between languages. According to the concept of cultural translation, when there are great cultural differences in the translated text, translators can greatly adjust the source language in the translation process, so as to realize the consistency of cultural functions [3].

3 Translation methods of metaphor in *Fortress Besieged* based on cultural translation theory

Metaphors are closely related to cultural backgrounds. The intellectual group in the novel *Fortress Besieged* has deep-rooted Chinese cultural roots, so the metaphors in the novel are also closely related to traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, the translation methods used by the translator in translating the metaphors in *Fortress Besieged* should conform to the requirements of the cultural translation theory.

3.1 Literal translation

We usually use literal translation in translating most works. When the metaphor of the original text is transformed into the target language, the concepts are the same and the meaning is the same, so that the recipients of the two languages can understand the original meaning of the author and realize the function of metaphor. The literal translation can directly translate the metaphor in the original text.

Source language: Er nai nai he san nai nai da ban de lin li jin zhi, tian qi you re you han, jiu xiang ban rong hua de nai you dan gao.

Target language: Second daughter-in-law and third daughter-in-law were dressed to the nines, and it was hot and sweaty, like half-melted buttercream.

Here, the author metaphorically describes second daughter-in-law and third daughter-in-law with make-up as half-melted cream cakes. When people think of cream cakes, they will definitely think of "sweet" and "delicious", while "half-melted" will remind people of the outside environment, which is more graphic. This sentence not only describes the beauty of the two ladies after putting on makeup, but also vividly portrays the dry heat of the weather, which can be directly translated to make foreign readers understand its deep meaning.

3.2 Conversion of metaphor

In translation, it is often faced with the situation that the original language is different from the target language itself, for there are great differences in the cultural background, life language and knowledge reserve of the recipients of the two languages. At this time, literal translation according to the metaphor of the original text may lead to the confusion of the target language recipient. If the recipient cannot understand the original intention of the original author, the translator should change translation method in time, finding a way to make the recipient understand and carry out an indirect translation.

Source language: You ta, cai ke yi sheng yi dian, kan jian ta na ge si xi wan zi de lian, ren jiu bao le.

Target language: If he appears, the food can be saved a little, seeing his face of the four-happiness meatball, people are full.

Four-happiness meatball is a traditional Chinese dish made of minced meat. Qian Zhongshu notes that the human face and the meatballs are similar in appearance: round, large, and even greasy. When reading this comparison, the reader is surprised and then smiles. The meatball face is a new expression that requires the reader to work extra hard to understand, but meatballs are a common food in people's daily lives and are not new to foreign readers as they are sold in supermarkets. So it was easy for the source and target audience to make a connection between the face and the meatballs in order to make the most of it and stay relevant. A simple understanding of the phrase as four happy meatballs would be detrimental to the understanding of the work.

Source language: Lao shi ren de e yi, bi ru mi li de sha li, yu pian li de bu gan jing de gu tou, hui gei ren yi zhong bu qi dai de tong ku.

Target language: The malice of honest people, such as grit in rice and unclean bones in fish fillets, can give a pain that is not expected.

When the author describes the old lady's evil words, she does not write directly about what harm her words have done to the other person, but by switching metaphors. The gravel in the rice and the unclean bones that appear in the fish fillet everything seems so out of place, and people are always indescribably uncomfortable when they see something appearing in a place where it should not be, further reflecting the author's masterful writing style.

3.3 Free translation

There are many metaphors in *Fortress Besieged* that cannot be directly translated or replaced due to differences in linguistic structure and cultural context, and text translation or replacement makes the target language readers unaware of what is happening, or even counterproductive. In this case, we can discard the images in the source language and adopt the free translation method [4].

Source language: Zao chen fang xing, ting jian chuang wai shu shang niao jiao, wu li you de gao xing, wu mu di de qi dai, xin si hu jian qing zhong liang, zhi sheng shang qu.

Target language: When Fang Hung-chien woke up in the morning, he heard birds chirping in the trees outside his window, and he was so happy for no reason, so excited for no purpose, that his heart seemed to lighten its weight and go up.

When people are happy, they will forget a lot of worries, so they will not have a lot of worries weighing on their minds, and their hearts will be relieved of a lot of weight. Therefore, when translating, it is important to translate the meaning expressed by the author.

Source language: Hongjian dao, "Ta shi roujia de nai nai, hen zhong shi, bu hui kai you."

Target language: Hung-chien said, "She used to be Jou-chia's wet nurse. She's very loyal. She wouldn't cheat us."

The Chinese pronunciation of "kai you" means to take advantage of others, so it is difficult for readers who do not

understand the Chinese connotation to understand this word. Therefore, the translator needs to translate directly the meaning expressed by the author.

4 Conclusion

In the translation of metaphor, it is difficult to find the corresponding expression of the source language information in the target language. As a form of cross-cultural communication, translation is not only a process of language transformation, but also a process of cultural transformation. However, cultural differences can pose many barriers to translation. Translators should pay attention to the choice of information and the cultural transformation in the translation process. The translator must master the similarities and differences between these two languages and cultures. As can be seen from the above cultural differences, the loss of information is inevitable during the translation process. However, there are still some untranslatable non-metaphorical expressions caused by cultural differences in the English translation.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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